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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARRETT,  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

I, Special Agent Robert M. Barrett, was interviewed by Committee Staff member Paul Wallach, in Room 608, Carroll Arms, Washington, D.C. The interview began at 2:02 PM and was recorded by Mr. Alfred H. Ward.

At the outset, Mr. Wallach advised that the Committee was attempting to determine whether or not there was any basis for reopening of the case of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He further stated the Committee was reviewing the activities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) before and after the assassination.

Mr. Wallach asked when I arrived in Washington, D.C., and how I received notice to come to Washington, D.C., for this interview. He was told I arrived about 5:45 PM on December 16, 1975, and that on Friday, December 12, 1975, I had received notice of a teletype from FBI Headquarters to my office in Birmingham, Alabama, instructing me to report to Washington, D.C., on December 17, 1975, for this interview.

Mr. Wallach asked if I had conferred with any Bureau officials prior to this interview. I informed him that I had met with Inspector John Hotis of the Legal Counsel Division. Mr. Wallach asked for the contents of this discussion and I advised him that I had asked Mr. Hotis if he knew the reason why I was being interviewed by the Committee, and that Mr. Hotis had stated he did not know the reason or purpose other than it concerned my role in the assassination investigation.

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81

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARRETT,  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

I told Mr. Wallach that Mr. Hostis had further informed me that I should decline to answer any questions as to sensitive sources, sensitive techniques, on-going investigations, and any information received from a third agency.

Mr. Wallach asked if I had talked to Mr. Paul Daly, and he was informed Mr. Daly was in and out of the office frequently and that I had had very little conversation with him. Mr. Wallach asked how long I had talked with Mr. Hostis, and I told him the above conversation was very brief, that I was originally informed the interview was to take place at 10:00 AM, that this was subsequently changed to 2:00 PM and that I had spent the time in Mr. Hostis' office waiting and occasionally discussing other unrelated matters.

I also told Mr. Wallach that I had been interviewed earlier on December 17, 1975, by Assistant Director Harold N. Bassett, and Deputy Assistant Director J. Allison Conley. Mr. Wallach asked what this interview was about, and I told him I was questioned as to any knowledge I had of Lee Harvey Oswald coming to the FBI Office in Dallas prior to the assassination and leaving a note for Special Agent James Hosty. I told Mr. Wallach what I had previously told Mr. Bassett, that some four or five months after the assassination I was asked by someone in the Dallas Office, whose identity I can't recall, (because what this unrecalled person asked me was a rumor and insignificant) if I had heard the rumor that Oswald had come to the Dallas Office where he asked Nan Fenner, the Receptionist, to see Hosty. I recall there being no mention of any note left by Oswald, nor did Hosty, or anyone else in Dallas ever talk to me about the incident, the note or the contents of the note. Mr. Wallach asked if I had reported to anyone in Dallas at the time the above incident and Mr. Wallach was advised I did not report a rumor and that I treated it as a rumor, in that I promptly forgot about it as I was very busy at the time conducting investigations of other matters having to do with the assassination.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARRETT,  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

Mr. Wallach asked if Mr. Hotis had informed me of my right to counsel and I stated this had been done. Mr. Wallach then advised me of my right to counsel and my right to refuse to answer any questions. I advised Mr. Wallach I was aware of my rights.

Mr. Wallach advised me that recorded results of this interview would later be available to me, in Washington, D.C. I asked if I would be furnished a copy and if a copy would be furnished the Bureau. I was informed that the Bureau would not be furnished a copy nor would anyone, other than myself, from the Bureau, have access to this report. I was also told that I would be advised by mail when I could have access to the report. Mr. Wallach did not say if I would be furnished a copy. He also said I could request the presence of a Senator during the interview, which request I did not make.

Mr. Wallach then asked about my Bureau career and assignments prior to November 22, 1963. He was advised of my assignments in Phoenix from 1952 to 1954, in Amarillo, Texas, from 1954 to 1956, and in Dallas from 1956 to 1966. Mr. Wallach inquired as to what kind of investigative work I was doing as of November 21, 1963, and I told him that primarily I was assigned to investigations having to do with organized crime, gambling, and criminal intelligence, and occasionally some involved civil rights cases, and some extortion cases. Mr. Wallach asked how long I had been doing such work and who else in the Dallas Office was either working with me or doing similar work. I told him I had been working these type cases since November, 1957, and that I was assisted by SA Ivan D. Lee from about 1960, or so, until the assassination, at which time Lee and I were both assigned to the assassination investigation, primarily, for about a year.

Mr. Wallach then asked me to define a "hip pocket informant" and after I gave him my definition, he asked if I had any in Dallas. I defined a "hip pocket informant" as a source of information whose identity was never made known nor was there ever any record made that such a person was being used as an informant. I told Mr. Wallach I have never employed "hip pocket informants" in Dallas or elsewhere.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARNETT,  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

Mr. Wallach asked if I knew of, or had heard of "Carlos" Trafficante of Tampa, and Carlos Marcello of New Orleans, Louisiana. I said that in investigations of organized crime matters, I had become acquainted with these names, but I believed the correct name was Santos Trafficante, to which Mr. Wallach agreed. Mr. Wallach asked if I knew of a man named McWillie (Phonetic) and I said I could not recall ever having heard of this name.

Mr. Wallach asked if I knew of Jack Ruby. I said I had known Ruby as the owner or operator of two Dallas night clubs, that were frequented by pimps, prostitutes and persons involved in criminal activities. I was asked if I had ever talked to Ruby and I said I had on maybe two occasions prior to November 21, 1963, but I could not recall the contents of these conversations, other than it most likely had to do with persons who frequented Ruby's night clubs.

Mr. Wallach asked if I was aware of a connection of Ruby with Trafficante, with Marcello, and with McWillie (Phonetic). I said I was not aware of any connection by Ruby with any of these persons and repeated that I did not recall the name McWillie.

Mr. Wallach asked if I was acquainted with the term "PCI" - "potential criminal informant", if I knew Jack Ruby was a PCI of the Dallas Office, and if I knew the identity of the FBI Agent in Dallas, a "red headed fellow" who had had Ruby assigned to him, and which Agent was later disciplined or transferred. I had just begun to answer Mr. Wallach, when U. S. Senator Richard D. Schweiker, of Pennsylvania, entered the room at 2:33 PM and thereafter took part jointly in the interrogation of me with Mr. Wallach, after introducing himself. Mr. Wallach briefly reviewed with Senator Schweiker what had previously transpired in the interview. Senator Schweiker asked if I knew Ruby was a PCI and if I was not aware of Ruby's connections with organized crime.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARNETT  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

I stated that my investigation of organized crime and criminal intelligence matters in Dallas were primarily concerned with the activities of Joseph Francis Civello and his associates and the activities of a roving band of criminals, not connected with Civello, who used Dallas as a base for their activities. I stated that in these investigations neither I nor SA Lee had become aware of any involvement by Ruby in organized crime matters or any association with the persons who were the subjects of our investigations.

At this point, 2:37 PM, Senator Schweicker asked Mr. Wallach if I had been sworn, and when told that I had not, Senator Schweicker placed me under oath, making reference to all the answers I had given prior to being sworn, as well as those I would give after being sworn.

I pointed out that if Ruby had been involved in organized crime matters, such as association with Trafficante or Maricello, and this had become known to the FBI, I was sure I, as an Agent assigned to organized crime investigations in Dallas where Ruby resided, would have been so advised and that this was not the case.

In answer to the questions about Ruby being a PCI, I stated I had heard something after November 24, 1963, that an Agent in Dallas had at one time opened a PCI case on Ruby, but I did not know any details such as when this occurred, the name of the Agent, and I was not aware that this Agent, whoever he was, had been disciplined because of any dealings with Ruby or for having Ruby as a PCI.

Senator Schweicker then asked if when a person is designated a PCI, the Agent makes such a recommendation to his superior and that Ruby had been made a PCI because of his connections with organized crime. I explained that a person can be designated a PCI by the Agent because of his association with the criminal element, his residence, his employment, or for any of a number of reasons, and that this person may never furnish any pertinent or useful information or be of any value. Senator Schweicker then asked if PCIs were not paid and I said they were only paid when they furnished pertinent or good useful information only on a C.O.D. basis. I was asked if Ruby had ever been paid and I said I had no knowledge of any such payment.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARRETT  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

I was asked if I had any opportunity to see Oswald in the police department at that time or any other subsequent time and I stated to the best of my knowledge Oswald had been taken to the office of Captain "Will" Fritz, that I never did go to Captain Fritz's office at any time on November 22, 23, or 24, 1963, and that I had never personally observed Oswald subsequent to his arrest in the theater in Oak Cliff.

At this point in the interrogation, Mr. Wallach asked me if I knew that disciplinary action by the Bureau had been taken against SA (James) Hosty. I advised them that I was aware of this through my association with Hosty in Dallas. I was then asked if I knew that some Assistant Directors of the FBI had been disciplined because of their handling of certain matters in the assassination investigation. I stated I was not aware of this and had no knowledge of any such disciplinary action.

Mr. Wallach then asked me if I had attended a "going away" party held, not in the Dallas Office, for Hosty by his friends in Dallas. I stated I did not recall any such party and further felt that if there had been such a party I would have been invited and would have attended because Hosty and I were in the same car pool, we attended the same church, we belonged to the same clubs, and I had coached his son on the school football team, and further, that many of Hosty's friends were also my friends.

I was asked if I recalled a conference being held by SAC J. Gordon Shanklin on the early morning of November 23, 1963, in which Agents of the Dallas Office were given instructions on investigation to be conducted that day. I stated that I recalled reporting to work on Saturday, November 23, at about 6:00 AM after having worked to about 3:00 AM that same morning from the Friday before, and I did not recall any such conference held by Mr. Shanklin.

I was asked if there had not been a conference on the morning of November 24, 1963, in which Mr. Shanklin instructed the Dallas Agents not to go near the area at the city jail where Oswald was being removed that day and I

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES  
INTERVIEW OF SPECIAL AGENT  
ROBERT M. BARRETT  
DECEMBER 17, 1975

stated I did recall those instructions, and further, I had been instructed, along with SA Ivan D. Lee, to go to KRLD-TV Station to obtain any pertinent photographs that that station might have and further, that while there I had observed, on closed circuit television, the Oswald shooting in the basement of the police department. I was asked if I had any knowledge of a telephone call received by the FBI during the night of November 23-24, 1963, containing a threat against Oswald. I said that to the best of my knowledge, I did recall something to the effect that SA Hilton Newson had been on duty during the early morning hours of November 24 at the Dallas FBI Office and had received such a call. I could not recall at this time who was the source of this information nor did I recall any details as to the contents of the call.

Mr. Wallach then asked if there had not been some occasions when Agents of the Dallas Office had been discussing the assassination and discussing whether or not it was their opinions that it was the act of one man acting alone or was a conspiracy. I stated I was sure that there had been such discussions on an informal basis but that I could not recall any details or anything as to when such discussions were held or who was present and, further, that I was sure that everyone connected with the investigation would have made some personal conclusions.

At this point, Mr. Wallach asked if it was not true that Mr. Shanklin or some other Bureau official had given explicit directions that the investigation was to establish that Oswald acted alone in connection with the assassination. Before I could answer this question, Mr. Wallach stated that such information had been received from other FBI Agents. I stated that this was not so, that I did not believe any other Agents had made such statements, and further, that we had, to the contrary, been given instructions to conduct our investigation in an effort to establish all the facts to identify all persons involved.

At this point, which was about 4:23 PM, Senator Schweicker left the room and did not take any further part in the interrogation.